IN THE CLAIMS:

The text of all pending claims, (including withdrawn claims) is set forth below. Cancelled and not entered claims are indicated with claim number and status only. The claims as listed below show added text with underlining and deleted text with ~~strikethrough~~. The status of each claim is indicated with one of (original), (currently amended), (cancelled), (withdrawn), (new), (previously presented), or (not entered).

1. (Previously Presented) An image processing apparatus, comprising:

an image reading unit configured to receive a medium including a colorless and transparent carrier sheet that includes a combination instruction mark in a predetermined position thereon and holds an original therein and configured to read a front side image and a rear side image from a front side and a rear side of the original, respectively;

a mark detecting unit detecting the combination instruction mark present in the predetermined position; and

an image combining unit combining a front side sliced image and a rear side sliced image sliced from predetermined positions of the front side image and the rear side image in a predetermined direction to obtain one image when the combination instruction mark is detected.

2. (Original) The image processing apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising:

a tilt correcting unit correcting a tilt with a vertical reference line or a horizontal reference line present in the predetermined positions of the front side image and the rear side image as a reference when the combination instruction mark is detected.

3. (Original) The image processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the image combining unit finds effective ranges in the front side image and the rear side image, selects a larger one of the effective ranges, determines a formal size larger than the selected effective range and closest to a size of the effective range as a size of images, and slices images of the determined size from the front side image and the rear side image to combine the images into one image.

4. (Previously Presented) The image processing apparatus according to claim 1,

wherein the mark detecting unit sets each of the front side image and the rear side image as individual one image when the combination instruction mark is not detected.

5. (Previously Presented) The image processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein, when the mark detecting unit detects a predetermined non-combination instruction mark of a shape different from the combination instruction mark present in the predetermined position, the mark detecting unit neglects the combination instruction mark and sets each of the front side sliced image and the rear side sliced image sliced from the predetermined positions of the front side image and the rear side image as individual one image.

6. (Cancelled)

7. (Previously Presented) An image processing method executed in an image processing unit having an image reading unit, a mark detecting unit, and an image combining unit, the image processing method comprising:

at the image reading unit, receiving a medium including a colorless and transparent carrier sheet that includes a combination instruction mark in a predetermined position thereon and holds an original therein and reading a front side image and a rear side image from a front side and a rear side of the original, respectively;

detecting, by the mark detecting unit, a combination instruction mark present in the predetermined position; and

combining, by the image combining unit, a front side sliced image and a rear side sliced image sliced from predetermined positions of the front side image and the rear side image to obtain one image when the combination instruction mark is detected.

8. (Cancelled)

9. (Original) The image processing method according to claim 7,

wherein the medium includes a vertical reference line defining a position of a reference in a conveying direction, and

wherein the vertical reference line is used as a reference for slicing of the front side sliced image and the rear side sliced image from the front side image and the rear side image and combining of the front side sliced image and the rear side sliced image.

10. (Cancelled)

11. (Previously Presented) The image processing method according to claim 7, further comprising:

detecting, by the mark detecting unit, a non-combination instruction mark present on the carrier sheet; and

setting each of the front side sliced image and the rear side sliced image sliced from the predetermined positions of the front side image and the rear side image as individual one image when the non-combination instruction mark is detected.

12-19. (Cancelled)